

# Development or Developers?

## Developing Others As A Management Development Method

David R. Leigh

Just how does one go about developing a manager? Is it a process or is it a relationship? Attempting to learn the answers to these oft heard questions, or, more accurately, approximations of answers has triggered a monumental investment of industry's time and money in the last fifteen years. As the parade of new techniques, institutes, and fads rolls by each year, the manager and the training man are both tantalized and frustrated. Our attempts to measure personal improvement, and later to correlate this improved performance with a specific development program frequently lead to a headache and some very hazy bridges between cause and effect.

As we try one program after another, we wonder whether we have gained anything, whether there were constructive results, whether the prod-

uct is worth the effort and the expense. Our uncertainty sometimes expresses itself in the rapidity of adopting new programs and the same rapidity of replacing them with newer ones. Sometimes it seems that we are only on the move and that our movement has reference neither to a point of departure nor a destination. Maybe we should step back for a moment and look at the "training program" concept.

An examination of several questions may help us analyze our approach and orient our thinking to this basic question of "Development or Developers."

### Where Does Development Occur?

Does a person develop through formalized programs or does he grow primarily on the job? Studies conducted by various groups, including some of our major industrial concerns, consistently lead to the conclusion that

David R. Leigh

*Assistant Supervisor, Employee Education, the Dayton Power and Light Company, Dayton, Ohio. Has been with Dayton Power and Light since 1957 in industrial relations positions. Education includes B.S., Purdue University, and M.A., Miami University. Mr. Leigh is President of the Dayton Chapter, ASTD.*

November 1966

43

*most development takes place on the job.*

Although the daily routine offers some opportunity for this expansion, it is in the problem situations where the decision-making muscles of the mind are stretched and a man develops.

Does the job environment allow, plan for, and invite new situations, problems and decisions? If this is true, it is likely that growth and development will occur. If not, individual growth is stunted regardless of the individual's ability. The old axiom of "learning by doing" is one of those basic principles that is just as applicable to the job of a manager as it is to the assembly line worker.

Does this mean then that development is just a matter of being in the right job? Certainly not, but the opportunity to act within any job is a determining factor.

"Yes men" certainly do not cause their superiors many problems, but they do not grow either. Unfortunately, saying "Yes" on cue hasn't qualified the person to be a manager when the boss is gone.

"But what about all of our successful development programs that end in those glowing evaluation questionnaires training men like to leave carelessly on the boss' desk? Certainly you're not saying these aren't valuable?" Of course they contribute in knowledge and understanding, but how much good will they do if the man returns to a stagnant job situation where application is not encouraged? Are we developing people with our programs? This is a good question for each of us. The answer depends upon the application back on the job,

not on the evaluation sheet.

### Who Develops?

Who does the development? First, we must agree that no man develops until he himself decides to develop. He can then begin the process of his own development but he can scarcely carry it far alone. Who helps him from this point on? Is it the conference leader, the grand high mogul in charge of Personnel Planning, Organization, Education, Training and Development et cetera; or is it the individual's immediate superior? Obviously any of these people can contribute, but if the job is the place where most development takes place, the superior has the major responsibility whether he recognizes it or not.

Again in certain studies where successful managers were asked to state the most important factor in their own development,\* the resounding answer was "working for Joe Doakes," not "when I went to the Ignatz Training Program." Apparently, if a man is going to develop, it will happen on his job and it will be the result of his relationship with his immediate superior. We have known this for years but this knowledge somehow has not influenced the nature of our development effort.

Not only is the superior-subordinate relationship the environment within which important development occurs, but the responsibility for it is fixed at this same point. We are all aware of the potential hazards of having someone responsible for development in an organization. This is wise only when line management is very aware that the ultimate responsibility is still very much theirs. The "expert" is at the

\*Individual Growth: "The Basic Principles," an article by Moorhead Wright, General Electric.

supervisor's service, but he is not their "Alter-Ego in Charge of Development," to which they can delegate all responsibility for this function.

This brings us to our third question. If the job is the place where most development occurs, and the most critical factor in development is the man's immediate superior, then isn't our most important question:

**How Can We Make The Manager A More Effective Developer?**

To this writer it seems that the effort of the training expert should be aimed more frequently at *the superior and his role in the development of his people than at the subordinates themselves.*

Since the superior will determine to a great extent whether new learning and experience will be forbidden, tolerated, or encouraged on the job, the boss' attitude, his understanding and his active participation in the individual development experience are all critical factors.

If the supervisor does not realize his importance to his subordinates (and many do not), if he is unwilling to delegate any real responsibilities (and many are not), and if he cannot have a true coaching and counseling relationship (and many cannot), then any development attempted away from the job is too often just so much wheel spinning!

**Developing Developers For Development**

If this be the case, then why isn't more of our training effort being directed to the specific subject of the development function? It seems that the real key lies here—in assisting management with the necessary coaching and counseling skills and the *motivation* to do a better job of development. Prime emphasis should be placed on assisting our line man-

agers to learn how to be "developers" before we send their underlings away to schools, seminars and training programs.

This is not meant to imply that formal training, university seminars, job rotation and the like are worthless and should be dropped. They can be of great importance, but only if there is a healthy superior-subordinate relationship.

Where does this leave the training man? Is there nothing for him to do but sit back and say, "Develop those relationships boy," with his fingers crossed? No, at the risk of being accused of saying you can't—but you can, much of this training in development *can* be done in the classroom. This is particularly true in the learning and skill development phases, not from the standpoint of a magic formula for getting along with your subordinates, but at the awareness and need levels. To some extent even the motivation can be provided, but it is in this area that one of the serious problems arises—*Motivating the Manager to Develop His Subordinates.*

Unfortunately, development by a superior takes the superior's time. So does everything else. Which is easier to let slide today—following-up the Glutz order or talking to Sam about how he can improve his administration of order processing? "And besides—I can do it quicker than trying to teach him." Of course, if Sam had good coaching, there is a very good chance he could follow up the Glutz order, along with several others, not only this time but also the next. Why is it that at the moment it seems following up old Glutz oneself is a better investment of time than talking with Sam?

**Oh, For More Time**

"I'd love to spend more time coaching my men, but . . ." Here many of

November 1966

45

the previous principles run upon the rocks of reality. There is no denying that, like Egyptian mummies, nearly all executives and managers are pressed for time. Occasionally though, we meet one who seems to have time even though he occupies a key position. What is it that allows him this freedom—good planning? organization? delegation? “Development?”

Isn't it the old vicious circle routine? If one doesn't develop and delegate, he has to do it himself to get it done right, and in doing it all himself, he doesn't have the time to delegate, develop, et cetera.

“But, let's be practical. The squeaky wheel—and all that. Where's the reward for spending my time developing subordinates? I don't see it in that pay check on the first and the fifteenth.” And, this is a very good point. The motivational factor is probably the missing piece in this puzzle.

#### Where Is The Motivation?

Who can blame a manager for neglecting to make the effort of development if it is neither rewarded nor checked? Other elements of his job are. The decision to develop subordinates or ignore development arises from the same kind of internal and external motivating forces that mold other types of decisions.

The decision to develop people is based upon beliefs that the time and effort are good investments because they will be repaid in reduced problems for the developer, are expected as a part of his responsibilities, and will be noticed and rewarded by superiors.

The manager's decision to ignore development is frequently based on beliefs that center upon insecurities; fears that a subordinate may push him out of his job, learn more than he, or make waves on the smooth sea of or-

ganizational contentment. It can also be due to feelings that the time is better invested elsewhere, that development is solely the responsibility of the subordinate, that superiors neither care nor expect him to do this as a part of his job, and that the meager rewards (if he indeed can see any) certainly do not merit the effort. Add to this the fact that many managers delude themselves into thinking they are developing a man when in actuality they are doing little more than giving orders. Unless the assignment is accompanied by guidance and evaluation it may not be development at all.

#### From Whence Cometh Thy Motivation?

Emphasis on the external motivators may be our richest resource for stimulating interest in development. The psychologists have rather thoroughly poked, probed, and prodded our internal fears and frustrations in the last few years, so let us focus for a moment on the external motivators.

It is very possible that although top management asserts that they expect all managers to develop their people, they really desire only a casual compliance. To which tune do you listen, the high sounding pledge to development in the general manager's speech or the every day realities of the job? Has anyone in your organization been called on the carpet recently for poor development of subordinates? Do your executives periodically sit down with you and say, “What specifically are you doing to develop your people?” How often has a bonus been granted or a promotion offered specifically mentioning that it was tied to an effective job of development? How direct is the correlation between good development and flexible, adaptable and profitable management?

### Providing The Stimulus

Here are a few suggestions to induce more interest in development:

(1) Emphasize the subject of "development" in our organized training. Provide a strong program to acquaint managers with their responsibilities for development, and offer that training necessary to effective performance in the supervisor-subordinate role. Useful topics for conferences might be: The Manager's Role in Development, Interviewing, Coaching, Goal Setting, Employee Appraisal, et cetera.

(2) Start a crusade that "Development of Subordinates" be a significant factor in any management appraisal program. Place emphasis on the importance of development when goals are set and performance is evaluated. Reward above average performance in this field through recognition, advancement and monetary means.

(3) Strive for a top level policy with teeth so there can be no doubt as to what management expects. One approach is the "Annual President's Conference" where each executive would meet individually with the chief officer reviewing: a) his group's replacement and expansion needs, b) his

efforts over the past year to carry out an organized development program for his immediate subordinates, and c) his proposal for the future year's activities based on his plans and those of his subordinates.

### Summary

We have known for years that if a man is going to develop, most of the growth will take place on-the-job and will be the result of his superior's attitudes and guidance. We also know that to achieve the necessary superior-subordinate relationship, a manager must be aware of his responsibility, be skilled in the techniques of coaching, and know that it is advantageous for him as well as for the organization to make this investment.

Knowing that development can be encouraged best on the job, we still emphasize off-the-job development programs, and continue to send the man back to an environment which by indifference or hostility, may quickly render useless any new learning.

Why not put our effort where it will do the most good, aiding the manager in his efforts to be a better developer of others. In the process he is sure to develop himself as well.

## Luce to South America for AID

Leonard F. Luce, Supervisor of Training and Development at the Milwaukee Body Plant of American Motors Corporation, was selected by the State Department to visit South America for a six-week period, August 1 through September 15.

Mr. Luce was part of a three-man team, along with Dr. Joshun from New Jersey and Dr. Alevo from New York,

both Vocational Educators, to set up training programs in Santiago, Chile, in cooperation with the Agency for International Development.

On-the-job training programs similar to MDTA training programs, along with appropriate institution courses were set up for the Chilean Government for youths in critical occupations and emerging skills.

"FORCES WHICH UNDERMINE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT,"  
Edgar H. Schein,  
California Management Review, Vol. V, No. 4, Summer 1963

1. Some firms trying to encourage creative growth actually undermine it.
2. Training often produces little effect.
3. Pressures for loyalty may discourage growth.
4. Goals of management development should be two-fold; improved overall performance and increased capacity to take on new duties.
5. Assumes these goals have more to do with attitudes than increased skills.

"IMPROVING MANAGERIAL PERFORMANCE"

Virgil K. Rowland

Harper & Brothers, New York

1. Objectives:

- a. Managers primary job is to manage people, not things (not to do things himself).
- b. Objective of management development programs is two-fold: improve performance of managers and provide a reservoir of executives.
- c. Executive inventory used to facilitate placement and promotions:
  - (1) simplest method -- organizational chart;
  - (2) card index system with multi-colored tabs; and
  - (3) replacement charts.
- d. Current performances do not necessarily indicate potential (new job may require different knowledge and characteristics; thus need some kind of appraisal system).
- e. Development techniques vary widely: University training, special assignment to handle new kinds of work, rotation among the departments, evening classes, problem-solving conferences, etc.

2. Development techniques: List of development techniques includes:

- a. Job rotation;
- b. "Assistance to" positions;
- c. Advance management courses;
- d. Special courses at universities;
- e. In-company training;
- f. Attendance of meetings outside company;
- g. Special assignments;
- h. Distribution of reading matter;
- i. Job enlargements;
- j. Group participation in setting performance standards; and
- k. Feedback of information (surveys of opinions among employees).